



Laura Marmor

April 14, 1962 - January 9, 2025

Laura Carleton Marmor was born in Oxford, England on April 14, 1962 to Theodore Richard Marmor and Jan Schmidt Marmor. A quiet and docile child, Laura was joined by her loud and rambunctious sister, Sarah Rogers Marmor, in 1965, when the family was living in Cambridge, Mass. Ted's academic career took the family to Essex, England, Madison, Minneapolis, and Chicago in the ensuing years of her childhood. The family also spent part of most summers in England and on the west coast of Ireland, which created deep connections with friends and places, not to mention tea sandwiches. Annual extended visits to the Schmidt family cabin in Minnesota established a place of permanent home no matter where the Marmor family might move.

Laura was a bright and popular student at the University of Chicago Lab School (Class of 1980), where her experience as a reporter on the U-High paper sparked her interest in journalism. In 1979, the family moved to New Haven, CT. Rather than spend her senior year in a new school, Laura graduated early and spent a year traveling in Europe, where she discovered an enduring love of Italy. Upon her return, Laura matriculated to Harvard University (Class of 1984). At Harvard, Laura formed lifelong friendships. These included Paige Evans, one of the Pantheon of those who could be considered best friends along with "The Roommates," a group of fiercely devoted women who stayed connected through thick and thin. Laura majored in English at Harvard but she did not do the expected and join the Crimson.

Instead, she served on the Advocate, a poetry journal. That marked the start of Laura's lifelong love of poetry – poems she loved and shared with family and friends became enduring gifts of insight and solace in hard times.

After graduation, Laura moved to Rome, Italy, where she got her first job in journalism at an English language magazine. She and Paige lived in a boho dream of an apartment, with a large terrace overlooking the Campo de' Fiori. Laura learned the art of the long lunch there, which she perfected over the decades of her career; she also pursued her considerable and understandable love of the artichoke in all its forms. After a couple of years, she returned to the U.S. and took a job as an editor at the New York Review of Books. From there, she joined Esquire Magazine as an editor, after successfully guessing the meaning of the term “boardinghouse reach” in her interview. She helped launch Mirabella Magazine, and later was part of the team that relaunched Elle Magazine. She collected and championed writers to whom she would return again and again, and trained young editors to excel in their complicated business – and so many did. Laura moved on to the Wall Street Journal, as a Page One Editor, in the mid 1990s. In 2005, she joined the New York Times as the Deputy Editor to Stuart Emmrich in the Travel Section. Stuart and Laura were the closest of colleagues – with complementary skills that produced stellar work. Laura moved to the Styles section in 2011 with Stuart, where the two worked together for another five years until Laura decamped to the Book Review and later to Obituaries. They always remained friends; last week Stuart described Laura as “an invaluable colleague at the New York Times for more than a decade and an even greater friend for much longer than that.”

Memories of Laura from the many writers and editors she worked with tell a consistent story: she was admired and beloved. As Alexandra Jacobs of the Times wrote, she “was brilliant, kind, loyal, elegant and – despite her many credentials – unsnobbish. She was from the old school of editors that honors

writers and doesn't try to upstage or bigfoot them, that brings out their best work without crushing their egos. Those writers absolutely adored her." A colleague who "knew and admired Laura at college and then had the privilege of working closely with her for seven years on the Page One staff of the Wall Street Journal, where she was on a small team of elite editors working on the paper's most ambitious projects" wrote that she "was a wonderful colleague in every respect: superb storytelling skills, high standards, a warm and funny and insightful collaborator whom reporters loved working with. Several have reminisced to me that Laura was the editor on their all-time favorite stories." Jan Hoffman at the Times recalled that she "met Laura when she was a precocious young editor at Mirabella and I was a baby freelancer; my first impression was how bright, warm, quick and poised she was. That impression only deepened and solidified during the years we overlapped in Styles." Indeed, many noted Laura's particular skill at matching the right writer to the right story and letting their voice, not hers, come through in the final piece. "Ego-less," is how one of them put it.

Colleagues also honored Laura's support of women in the profession. "She was an ideal to live up to, an ideal that was always in my mind throughout my own career. She was always such a champion of other women. She helped many of my friends with their careers. I was so grateful when she helped my friend E. Jean Carroll get fair coverage of her story," wrote Rachel Combe, who worked with Laura at Elle in the 1990s, where Laura also edited Ms. Carroll. When Ms. Carroll's claims were first reported, Laura helped a team of women figure out how to get the Times to take the story seriously and lead the coverage, not just follow what others were doing. Ms. Carroll's claims, of course, later were vindicated.

"Laura was the kind of editor who would lobby for you without you knowing it; who would tell you when somebody passingly complimented your work (rather

than taking the compliment herself); who came to care about you as a writer but also as a person. I cannot tell you the number of emails she edited; the amount of behind the scenes help she offered; the framing up of complicated asks or difficult conversations; or figuring out the right way to deliver a message, to strike the right tone,” shared Jessica Bennett, a reporter at the Times. “She was a masterful editor not just of stories but of communication and of life. She mentored a generation of youngish women writers like me, and I saw her do it for many young women who came after. She became a little famous amongst my friends: ‘Is that “a Marmor”?’ my husband and friends would say, when they’d read a piece they liked in the paper.” Aimee Lee Ball put it succinctly: “How often do we get to work with an editor who makes journalism, with all its craziness, an absolute pleasure?”

Although Laura’s distinguished career was important to her, her daughters – with former husband and enduring friend, Jorn Holl – were most important to her. Nina Gabriel Holl was born in 1996, and Ava Kathryn Marmor Holl completed the family in 1998. Raising these two smart, kind, generous young women was Laura’s most enduring achievement. The family left New York for Hastings-on-Hudson in the early aughts to ensure a safe place for the girls to thrive in the post 9/11 world. Laura was not in her Journal office – across the street from the WTC – on that fateful morning; but she saw the second plane hit while she was walking the girls to school. She and Jorn wanted their daughters to have a joyful childhood, and in Hastings, Laura soon found another group of friends and fellow parents who showed her the ropes and helped lay a solid foundation for the girls’ adulthood. In Hastings, Laura continued her morning habit of long phone calls with friends near and far. The investment and care she put into her friendships knew no bounds, and imprinted on the girls.

Laura returned to the City after the girls left for college. She relished in her proximity to world-class theatre, seeing shows as often as she could. This was

a longtime source of joy. Laura also dove back into the social whirl for a time. Many colleagues and friends remembered the parties she threw in her beautiful apartment on 22nd Street or helped arrange elsewhere in the city – almost always with a ham involved. Covid and health struggles brought an end to that phase of her life, sadly. Laura passed away from congestive heart failure on January 9, 2025.

Jan Marmor died in 2003. Ted remarried several years later to Kieke Okma, who has been a loving partner and comfort to Ted as he has faced the shock and dislocation of losing a child. Extended family, including Ted's sister Barbara Marmor and her husband, Joe Haydu, and Jan's brother and sister-in-law Robert and Fran Schmidt also have remained close and have held the family up in these terrible times. Nina's and Ava's friends from Hastings and college (Northwestern undergraduate and law school for Nina; Brown for Ava) likewise have created circles of love and support for the girls. Sarah, a lawyer in Chicago with too many dogs, has been equally buoyed by friends and colleagues as she grapples with losing her sister and only sibling. All of this, a testament to the Marmor gift for and of friendship.

A memorial celebration of Laura Marmor's life will be held in New York City on February 21st, 3pm EST.

You may livestream the service, which begins 3pm, here: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83820301463?pwd=svp76883m3aOg9ojtXXJvNbdk2nj4f.1>

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in Laura's name to PEN America, www.PEN.org.

Arrangements by Inclusive Funeral Care, 773-370-2959 or www.inclusivefuneralcare.com

Tribute Wall



“ *Inclusive Funeral Care created a Webcast in memory of Laura Marmor*



Team Inclusive Funeral Care - February 16, 2025 at 11:18 AM



“ *Basket Full of Wishes was purchased for the family of Laura Marmor.*



January 31, 2025 at 10:04 PM



“ *A [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) was planted in honor of Laura Marmor.*

January 31, 2025 at 10:04 PM



“ *My dismay and sorrow is such that I would rather leave happy photographs instead, with my words having been sent to the family in private. Please join me in remembering the happy Laura I captured in all these photos from our childhood.*

Shirin Moayyad - January 24, 2025 at 03:53 AM

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“ 3 files added to the tribute wall



Shirin Moayyad - January 24, 2025 at 03:52 AM